Keith Decker was drafted into the Army in 1965 and in 1966, served in Vietnam as a medic in the 1st Infantry Division. Upon his return, he studied art and design and began working in furniture design and manufacturing. In 1977, Keith opened his own company, Park West Furniture, which is still in operation today. Keith is an artist and utilizes various mediums to express themes of social justice in Vietnam and Latin America. His work has been published and is part of a permanent collection at the National Vietnam Art Museum in Chicago.

Keith has an extensive history working with organizations on social justice issues. For 10 years beginning in the early 1980s, Keith organized and led annual trips to work with Rural Mission, Inc on the sea islands of South Carolina. Volunteers worked on housing rehabilitation projects to support the mission’s goal of promoting safe and secure housing for residents.

In 1990, Keith traveled to Central America to study the effects of US foreign policy in Nicaragua and Guatemala. While in Guatemala, he was introduced to an orphanage that was founded to care for the indigenous children that were orphaned by the civil war. This short trip was the catalyst to 29 years of work in Guatemala. Keith developed an education fund that supports the educational needs of the children at orphanage.

Locally, Keith has served as a volunteer with the Lakeview Shelter System and at the Open Door Shelter, operated by the Night Ministry.

In 1993, he co-founded La Casa Norte and purchased the first building in Chicago’s Humboldt Park Neighborhood in 1999. La Casa Norte opened in 2002. The organization provides housing and comprehensive resources to individuals and families confronting homelessness. Keith remains an active member on Board of Directors.

Awards
Paul Harris Fellow, The Rotary Foundation. February 2007
Fischer Humanitarian Award, Wilmette Rotary. June 2012
Humanitarian Award, UNICEF. October 2015